



How excited are we all about the upcoming One Hundred Years of Summerhill? SO excited!

2021 will be a year of local, national and international celebration of A.S. Neill's educational philosophy and one hundred years of Summerhill School.

What an achievement! That daydreamer of a Scotsman with his crazy ideas about education, reviled by the popular press, misunderstood and misrepresented at every turn, this little 'experiment'

now comes of age to truly show that freedom for children works and to bring to the 21st century many important lessons about education and emotional growth. It could not come to the fore at a better time in history.

So, this will be an opportunity for all of us to celebrate the inspirations A.S. Neill gave us as a child, parent, student, teacher, educator, school, university or business.

First of all, we are kicking off the celebrations with a residential weekend at Summerhill in August 2019.

The Summerhill Experience

For the first time ever, we are inviting people to spend a weekend with us and really learn how Summerhill works – How do we do Safeguarding Children? How do we prepare for school inspections? What exams do we offer? How do our teachers approach their roles? How do the pupils feel about their own roles and lives in the school and afterwards?

It will include A.S. Neill's founding principles, the famous Self-Government Meetings, policies, paperwork, teaching and a chance to talk to adults and pupils. It is also a chance to just hang out in this unique historic environment and chill!

Profits will go to the building of the new A.S. Neill Centre that we are planning on the school grounds. This event will be in the school holiday time and it is designed for adults.

Further information will be displayed on our website and Facebook pages. To express interest in attending contact the 100th Birthday email: 100years@summerhillschool.co.uk

This brings us neatly to the new A.S. Neill Centre at Summerhill. We are already in the planning stage of our new enterprise to celebrate one hundred years of Summerhill and to pay respect to the founder A.S. Neill. We feel there is a real need for an archive and discussion/conference room alongside an area for research. By taking the pressure off the actual school itself, we will be able to offer more visiting days as well as other things without it impacting on the school community. Although we are very happy to have visitors, it can be difficult and can infringe on school life somewhat. For a number of years now we have not felt able to offer internships for this reason, but the new centre should help to meet this need.

Other possible ideas for the centenary have been an Arts Festival, a celebration party in London, perhaps a New Year's Eve party at Summerhill as the year turns to 2021 – maybe linking up over the internet with other schools or groups of people worldwide, a residential weekend for friends of Summerhill to celebrate in August 2021 and, of course, the next Summerhill School pupils' reunion... these are just very early thoughts and suggestions. If anybody has any ideas, do please get in touch –

100years@summerhillschool.co.uk

We really want everyone to participate in celebrating Summerhill's 100th!

Some ways you could get involved with the 100th Birthday celebrations...

- Send us a 100-second video to be shared worldwide, telling us how A.S. Neill inspired you and/or affected your life?
- Tell us how you intend to celebrate in 2021? We look forward to receiving your ideas and photos!
- Tell us what Summerhill has meant to Newsletter readers and what it still means.
- Tell us how being associated with Summerhill has impacted upon your life.

Get creative with your ideas...

Some ways you could get involved with the A.S. Neill Centre...

We are really excited to announce that fundraising for the A.S. Neill Centre has already begun. You could support us with a personal donation or you could organise your own celebration and fundraising event. All contributions will be acknowledged. Please send your donations to the A.S. Neill Summerhill Trust and clearly state that your contribution is to fund the building of the Centre.

If you want to get involved in any way please contact us at:

100years@summerhillschool.co.uk

Summerhill continues to thrive this year – with so much wonderful sunshine it would be hard not to. We have more little children than we have had for a very long time and it is an absolute delight! Play has been top of the agenda during this past summer. Many of the little ones were day pupils, coming in from nine to five but already a number of them are asking to board or at least start weekly boarding.

Now, that the new academic year has started we are looking towards our next school inspection, not that we do anything different for this, but we have to make sure that all our paperwork is up-to-date and that we have a space prepared for the visit. We do not get more than 48 hours notice. Hot-off-the-press the Head of Ofsted has just said that exam results will not be part of inspections from now on – Hmmm... Let us wait and see...

Just a small bit of Summerhill trivia. Two people in Chile met at university when studying education, and they say that as they were reading and discussing Neill's book, "Summerhill: a radical approach to child rearing" they got to know one another very well and without even noticing they fell in love with each other. By now, they have been together for 8 years and they say that Summerhill brought them together... Aaaah, so sweet! We wish them every happiness.

So, I hope that you enjoy this issue, kindly made by our team at Summerhill headed by Stephen and Szilvia.

Very Best to you all,

Zoë

Our Centenary Logos

As an important part of our celebrations we have commissioned two logos, designed by Sam Horwood.

The logos will be used on all our paperwork as we prepare to tell the World of our 100th Birthday. We really hope that they will become a familiar part of



1921–2021

**CELEBRATING
A CENTURY**

A.S. NEILL'S
SUMMERHILL SCHOOL

your life and that you will smile broadly when you see them. We feel that Sam has captured Neill's character beautifully.

Permission to use either of the logos will be granted to anyone/any group organising an event to celebrate the Summerhill Centenary. Please contact the School Office for details.



The launch of our new book

The early talks we had about how we might celebrate the Summerhill Centenary led us to consider the literature which is currently available about the school. With the intention of promoting and explaining the Summerhill message, in some detail, we have created a stunning volume which we believe captures the very essence of the School community. We believe that it will become essential reading for anyone interested in how our school is organised on a day to day basis and the way in which it continues to offer 'a childhood of space and freedom', in our over-busy 21st century. The 68-page book traces the beginnings of Neill's thinking through the School's early years with Neill and then Ena at the helm through to the present day. The book explains in text, written by Zoë, and beautiful photographs from a range of photographers, how relevant and contemporary Summerhill continues to be today.



The books will be officially launched on 🎈 Neill's 135th Birthday 🎈, on 17th October 2018. Information on how and where you can purchase this book, including the price, will be placed on the Summerhill Centenary page on the School's website very soon.

[This is recommended reading, don't miss the opportunity to purchase one of these limited edition books.]

- by the 100th Birthday Working Team

The A.S. Neill Summerhill Trust

Meet Neill Readhead who has recently become a Trustee

The latest member to join The A.S. Neill Summerhill Trust is Neill Readhead, a grandson of our founder and the youngest of Zoë and Tony's four children.

Hi Everyone,

It's nice to have this opportunity to write for this Newsletter. I'm really pleased to have been asked to become a member of the A.S. Neill Summerhill Trust.

I spent all of my childhood in and around Summerhill and I still have dreams of being there... being in the Carriages, being a Carriage Kid and spending time with friends. I left in 2004, and since then I have worked on the family farm with Tony and Amy and I'm still closely involved in the school.

I'm very proud that my daughter has now started her journey at Summerhill, which is another reason for me to be involved in the Trust. My hope is that one day my grandchildren will have a Summerhill Childhood.

I'll sign off in the tradition set by my grandfather,

All the best,

Neill



Photo by Stephen Southgate, 2018

A portrait photo of Leila Berg

A portrait photo of Leila Berg by our friend John Walmsley has recently been added to the collection at The [National Portrait Gallery](#) in London. It joins other works by John including one of Neill. The portrait of Leila is not on permanent display but can be seen by request, if an appointment is made with the gallery. John and Leila became friends during the production of the book 'Neill and Summerhill: a man and his work', for which John took the photographs and Leila wrote the text.



Photo by John Walmsley, 1976

Michael Boulton



I cannot write an obituary for Michael as I do not know much about his life but I can write as somebody who knew him and considered him a good friend.

He was from the generation of my older brother, Peter, so my relationship with him was not a close one but I saw him often when they used to all come down to Summerhill to visit Peter in the summer holidays.

I remember going to his family home to visit his mother, Maud I think she was called, who seemed very old and a little

intimidating and lived in a big rather smart house. Mike used to visit school when he was dancing with the Sadler's Wells ballet company (he was principal dancer there). One day we had a bus trip to Ipswich with the whole school to see him dancing at the Ipswich Odeon theatre. As a young ballet-mad girl he was a hero. He was, at that time, going out with young up-and-coming dancer, Anya Lyndon, who was tipped to be the next Margot Fonteyn and so a bit of a celebrity. She used to come to school with him and all of us little girls were smitten!

One day he and his mother took me to Covent Garden to watch Anya dance in *Sleeping Beauty*. Afterwards we went backstage – I remember walking through this huge room with a really old floor all pitted with holes and gnarled wood – it turned out to be the actual stage. I wondered how on earth they could dance on it like that on their points and flimsy ballet shoes. As we went to see Anya we bumped into a short woman with really bizarre make-up on – a bit scary actually. It was Margot Fonteyn the Prima Donna, I was SO impressed.



Mike remained a friend to our family over the years. He sent both of his children Mike and Julia to Summerhill. In later years he would come down to Suffolk every summer to visit my mum so we always caught up for a gossip.

Although Mike had come to the end of his life, it is always sad to lose another Summerhillian but I am glad to have grown up with him as one of my “extra uncles”.

- Zoë

The A.S. Neill Summerhill Trust would like to thank Michael's family for the donation sent in his memory.

A little bit of nostalgia and history is in order...

Neill wrote this in 1945, the year before my birth.

xx Zoë

What is an 'Educated Man'?

We need a new standard in education writes A.S. Neill, head of Summerhill School, one of the most famous “experimental” schools in Britain

The Education Act is to give ample education to all, and children from eleven onwards will be competing for places in higher schools. Good, but what kind of education is it to be?

The danger is that the workers will accept the standard of education that the rich have adopted, that is, one that produces an “educated man.”

So that the next question is this one: What is an educated man?

The answer of the rich and cultured would possibly be: a man of liberal culture, a culture that values learning, placing a university degree as a criterion of top success.

Children will have more and better and higher maths and languages and what not: they will learn quadratics that they will never use, French they will never speak, history that ignores people.

But learning is not education and many of us know B.A.s and M.A.s who are stupid and narrow, The people must refuse the education of the Haves, must demand a new education altogether.

Let me put up two lay figures and compare them:

Robert Somebody, of Someplace Hall. Educ. Eton and Oxford. B.A. (Fine Library; reads Milton and Dryden and Shelley; can read Homer in the original Greek).

Bob Nobody, of Side Street, E.C. Mechanic, maker of tools on precision machines. (Reads the Daily Worker, but if you mentioned the name Milton to him it might suggest a mouthwash rather than “Paradise Lost”).

Robert is a man of culture, a highly educated gentleman. Bob, with his occasional mistakes in grammar and spelling, is a common man of little education.

But in a capitalist State it is almost impossible to escape snobbery, and either consciously or unconsciously Bob feels himself inferior to Robert, and is inclined to

seek for his children, if not for himself the opportunities that gave Robert his culture and superiority.

And so, when the new Act promises education for all, poor Bob is apt to think that classroom learning will automatically bring the new Jerusalem in which Robert and Bob will be equally educated.

What Bob does not realise is that his culture belongs to tomorrow, while that of Robert belongs to yesterday, the yesterday of squires and leisured class.

It is ludicrous that a man who can do skilled handwork should feel inferior to a university professor who may not be able to mend a puncture, ludicrous that the ploughman who can make a perfect stack or a straight furrow should rank lower in culture than a teacher.

They talk of the new era, the era of the common man, but if he is going to accept the academic standard of the uncommon man we shall end in pedagogical Fascism.

The question, then, is not how many schools we are to have or how many trained teachers: it is the more fundamental one: Are we to drop the daft idea that mere knowledge is culture, mere book-learning education?

Education is living, doing, being. It is more to do with feeling than thinking, for in the great things in life we act after our feelings and not our intellects.

Feeling made us choose the fighting Churchill the national leader, but when the great national leader became the small Tory leader our intellects protested... but we couldn't keep our feelings out of the protest all the same.

Our schools deal with the intellect; they almost ignore the feeling side of life, so that when we leave school our undeveloped emotions are easily satisfied with cheap films, the sensational and pictorial press, the minor delights of watching racing and football.

Hence the common man should by-pass the education of the rich and academic and seek a new education that will start with the heart and not the head.

This education should be primarily creative – writing plays instead of cramming Hamlet; making music, not only listening to it, painting pictures instead of having lectures on the Post-impressionists, creating things out of wood and metal and plastic, dancing, play – for childhood is play-hood and we none of us had enough play in early years. School barracks and discipline murder play.

With creation must go freedom. School discipline is an excellent way of turning out a servile proletariat, and one who has called a teacher “Sir” and humbly asked to be excused to go to the lavatory, is well on the way of accepting all the bosses of industry and finance later.

True, the public schools have their discipline also, but it is the discipline that leads to mastery, not servility.

The only discipline of any value is self-discipline, and my school has shown for 25 years that a child is capable of using self-government with an absence of obedience to, respect for and fear of adults.

True self-government in a big school with desks and prison-like rooms and a meagre concrete playground, with compulsory attendance at lessons is not easy to have.

This suggests that the new school must not be a barracks, a cram shop. It must be a spacious hive of creation with self-determination for all children to seek their own lessons (and by gum, they will demand the best teachers too!).

The new Education Act won't abolish the barrack school, and we don't expect it to do so. But what I mean is that, while accepting minor advances, we must keep our eyes fixed on the big ideal. And, after all, the Education Act leaves so much out. Why didn't Butler decree that all caning and fear be ruled out of school? If a teacher in Russia beats a child he is automatically sacked, and in pre-Hitler Saxony corporal punishment was forbidden.

Again, why did Butler allow the religionists to steal his Act? All that fuss about the Church schools (that seem to beat the children just as effectively as non- church schools!).

The common man should demand that religion have no place in the school. Christ's followers whacking kids – why teach religion and allow the devil to have all the best canes as well as the best tunes? The difference between a caning teacher and an S.S. guard in Buchenwald is only one degree; both introduce hate and cruelty.

I end with a plea to readers to realise that the new world of radio and films and science need a new standard of culture and education. I know all about acres and rods and poles; I can solve geometrical problems, but my culture is of no use when my radio set goes west.

Then the university-trained teacher has to call in the knowing local radio expert, who, poor devil, fancies that I am better educated than he is.

From the Daily Worker, Monday July 16th 1945 – cost, one penny

Vivien Morton's account from the Newsletter of 1987

Vivien Morton (nee Jackson) was the daughter of T.A. (Tommy) Jackson. She taught writing and printing at Summerhill during the 1930s/1940s. She married A.L. (Leslie) Morton who also taught at Summerhill when the school was based at Lyme Regis.



Vivien Morton

.. Thanks for letting me know about the Summerhill programme on Anglia TV (School programme - Choices) - Leslie and I enjoyed it, though we were astonished that anything about Summerhill could fail to mention even the name of A.S. Neill. This, combined with the warning issued at the start, that teachers should preview the programme before showing it and not show it at all to under twelve year olds, would have made us angry if it hadn't made us laugh.

I enjoyed all of No. 3, perhaps in particular Roger's letter. As one of the VERY old ones - at least three years older than Roger, I remember well his portable gramophone. I had just left University in 1933 and Summerhill was the only job connected with education that I could get, though Neill didn't need a teacher but a housemother. I used to bring my bag mending for sixteen kids to Olive's Hut, between Mrs Lins' Hut and Roger's hut. Olive and I would mend and chat and listen to Roger's records. At first I put up an old-fashioned resistance to jazz, but was soon won over by his Duke Ellington classics, especially Mood Indigo and Solitude. Then other records enticed me with works like: -

'Lazy bones, sleeping in the shade
Never get your corn-meal made

Sometimes Mrs Lin would come and sit on the steps of her hut, even in late November sunshine, before giving a lesson or going off to supervise the midday meal.

At the hatch was the cook, the formidable Mrs Peachey who used to say 'Apples, orange or banana?' and give us the one we hadn't asked for. We got quite cunning at getting what we really wanted.

Later, Cyril Elyse (Squeaker) gave me his wind-up portable gramophone, which I still have, and records made when Leslie bought A L Lloyd and BBC recorders to tape genuine folk songs still being sung in those pre war days by old men at the Eels Foot in Eastbridge.

In 1938 we made a theatre, close by those three huts, and every Sunday evening we did impromptu acting or occasionally a play written by Neill or one of the kids. Mostly we climbed on the

stage and made up the words as we went along. This ended with the 1939-45 War. After Summerhill went to North Wales in 1941, the military occupied the building and wrecked the theatre, but of course Summerhill came back and rose to fresh heights; you (Zoe) were born and a whole new era began!

I'll end with whole-hearted backing of Freer's ideas*, but in my rheumatic - arthritic state I couldn't give much more than moral support. Now that I fully understand for the first time the meaning of MORE POWER TO YOUR ELBOW!

- May I wish it for the Friends of Summerhill!

Yours affectionately

Vivien

*Freer's idea was for "Friends of Summerhill" to become a charity.

Adding to the Summerhill Archive...

Do you have any photos that you could copy or donate to our growing archive?

Would you be prepared to write an account of your time at Summerhill or your association with the school community?



We are busy collating in preparation for the great Centenary celebration. If you have any materials that you feel you could add to our exciting collection please do not hesitate to make contact.

Contact can be made via the [School Office](#).

We look forward to hearing from you.

Stephen
Summerhill's History Teacher and Member of the A.S. Neill Summerhill Trust

A Year in Retrospect

This has been a busy year for Summerhill, starting off with welcoming many new kids in the San, the youngest area in the school. Although many started as day kids, we saw a full San for the first time in quite a while, and this was an opportunity for the community to come together to help these little ones. The September term is always one of change as the new 'oldest kids' step up to the challenge of taking the running of many aspects of the school under their belts. They did a fantastic job and the problems and worries of so many new kids learning the Summerhill way was eased by their expertise.

A giant rainstorm flooded the dip by the school office and the kids delighted in playing in this giant puddle. Everyone loved getting a bit messy and wet before returning indoors for cocoa, baths and blankets!



At Halloween, a masterful makeup team in the art room turned half the school into zombies, and they inhabited the House for a game which involved the other members of the school trying to get out of the school on a set path, armed with nerf guns. Creepy music and lighting made the whole event feel very real and only one team managed to make it up to the Office to escape (the goal of the game) with dozens of zombies charging up the path after them! Later that week trick or treating and dressing up ensued, and the festivities ended with a giant fireworks display on the Hockey Field with day kids and parents invited to join for hot chocolate and soup by the bonfire.

Christmas was suitably raucous, with a fantastic Christmas lunch prepared by the kitchen staff, then carols (delivered in the traditional Summerhill way, where volume is valued over delivery, at least in the infamous '12 Days of Christmas!') and presents for all the kids and staff.





In the spring term we were treated to a late snowstorm, which covered the school for days and allowed huge snowball fights and a giant snowman, helped in creation by aid from the farm machinery operated by members of the Readhead family.



At the end of the spring term we hosted a smaller international schools' weekend than usual (due to schedule constraints in the summer term) but still enjoyed having visiting schools from the Czech Republic and France.



Summer was long and hot, with England experiencing a sustained heatwave for most of the term.



Older kids in the school organised a traditional sports day, with a Summerhill edge! Tug-O-War and wheelbarrow races were hard fought between different age groups in the school, and an obligatory water fight was well catered for with wheelbarrows full of balloons and hosepipes!

Later in the term one of our leavers put on a jazz gig in the Café, with everyone dressing up in their version of 'fancy jazz club attire'. Outfits consisted of 20's flapper dresses and headbands, to suits and dinner dresses and after the event swing dancing was attempted late into the evening!



Shortly after this, the end of term music event took place on the new balcony out the front of the school, bunting was put up and a whole concert of popular music and original songs were performed, with one student presenting a retrospective of her time at Summerhill through songs about how she has grown and developed here. The finale led into the school's year photo and then the biggest party of the year. The leavers gathered in the centre surrounded by the whole school for 'Auld Lang Syne' the official Summerhill leaving ceremony, many tears were shed for the leavers and their next steps in life after Summerhill, and then we partied until dawn before seeing everyone off, some for the last time, the following morning!

- written and photos taken by Owen P. Morgan

Interviews with Summerhill Kids

The Leavers

An interview with Ben Liu

How long have you been at Summerhill?

I've been here ever since September 2012, so that's 6 years!

Why did you come to Summerhill?

I loved the idea of a democratic school, where there's freedom, love and responsibility to not only take care of yourself, but a community.

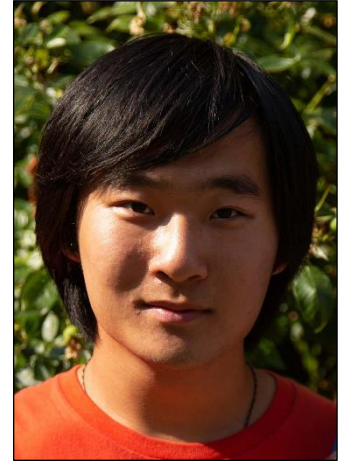


Photo by Owen P. Morgan, 2018

How did it feel when you first started at Summerhill?

I felt a little frightened, mostly because I was baffled about the functionality of The Meeting, as a second language speaker. I also had trouble understanding what words meant. Thankfully everything worked out in the end.

What makes Summerhill special?

The absolute freedom that lets you discover your passion. Also the atmosphere of being a responsible community member.

What is your favourite game at Summerhill?

WEREWOLF GAME!

How much POC (pocket money) do you get and what do you spend it on?

I get £15 as a Carriage Kid and I spent it on food, movies, video games and books.

When you leave Summerhill, what will you miss the most?

Absolutely everything and everyone.

If you could change one Summerhill rule, what would it be?

Nope, it's awesome already.

What do you most look forward to doing in the school holidays?

Play music, meet up with my parents and old pals.

What is the best kind of day at Summerhill?

To be honest, every day here feels special to me, so I can't decide.

Is there anything you don't like about Summerhill?

FK, no.**

Favourite meal at Summerhill?

Brunch

What is your most memorable Meeting case so far?

Ozzy proposed that people can reserve seats in the Little Kids Sitting Room.

(Tom: "That's the saddest thing I've ever heard.")

Is there anything you feel you have added or given to Summerhill?

With my Jazz Gigs, I hope I delivered happiness to my audiences. Also I hope I helped people just as a community member. (Sec, Ombudsman, Bar, BO)

What is the most important thing you have learnt at Summerhill?

Everything is gonna be alright in the end.

And there's nothing you can't get through.

What would you say was your biggest achievement, or greatest pleasure at Summerhill?

Just being here is my biggest pleasure. I met so many people and achieved good grades in my exams. My music knowledge is also greatly improved

What will you be doing next, when you leave?

Going to college in Brighton.

Finally, is there anything you would like to add... your last word or thought about Summerhill?

I have done everything I wanted to do here and I didn't regret any of my decisions or actions. I guess I just want to say "THANK YOU SUMMERHILL".



The Metalwork



The Summerhill Metalwork is one of the areas of the school that has had some major development over the past few years and a generous donation by a wonderful old Summerhillian made a real difference. So we can now boast a well-stocked and vibrant



workshop, offering welding, fabrication, jewellery making and blacksmithing. Will has also been training regularly with master bladesmith Owen Bush and has developed a passion for the art of bladesmithing and can offer lessons in this specialist craft, along with pattern welding (i.e. making damascus steel).

***Now... there can't
be many schools
around today that
can offer that!***

The metalwork runs on a booking system rather than an open workshop as most of

the lessons are in small groups or one to one. However once your skill and experience level increase you can access and workshop independently.



Follow us on:

Facebook @[Summerhill Woodwork/Metalwork](#)

Instagram @[summerhill_woodwork_metalwork](#)

- written and photos taken by Will Readhead

The Freedom to Learn Forum

The Freedom to Learn Forum event took place on the 6 - 8th April in 2018, at Summerhill. It was a collaboration between Summerhill School, [The Phoenix Education Trust](#) and [The Freedom to Learn Project](#). The event brought together innovative educators, families and other pioneers to showcase and inspire unique learning communities governed by equality, freedom and collaboration. This was not a conference just for supporters of democratic education or Summerhill. This was an assembling of children, parents, the curious, unschoolers, home-educators, teachers working in mainstream settings as well as those involved with alternative projects around the UK.



Over 180 people including 35 children attended the event and there were a number of representatives from universities, mainstream schools and several educational organisations. The schedule comprised of two and a half days of open space workshops in a wide variety of topics including: how to recycle schools, how to run democratic meetings with children and growing the network of pioneers.

As a result of the Freedom to Learn Forum event, a network was formed whose members continue to collaborate via [Facebook](#) and have nearly 160 UK members sharing knowledge, experience and supporting one another with projects. They are planning to hold a conference annually at different locations within the UK in order to have the chance to meet again and continue learning from each other.

The Phoenix Education Trust are looking forward to announcing the dates and location for next year's forum very soon! Sign up to their [newsletter](#) or subscribe to their social media channels ([Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#)) for more details.

- written by Sally Hall, Phoenix Education Trust

The idea of having about 150 people visiting Summerhill is always a daunting task, but in our General Meeting we agreed that supporting such an important initiative by providing the home for this event was the least we could do. Our Summerhillian group of volunteers included several current and old students as well as some current and old staff members. We were happy to stay at school during the holidays and prepare the site for a huge group of visitors. The last few days before the event were quite tense, but as Summerhill's team of cleaners, cooks and volunteers were joined by other volunteers as well from the Phoenix Trust, we knew that everything was under control and we would prove to be great hosts of this event.

We wanted to provide our guests with a "flavour of Summerhill", so we held meetings that were run by experienced Summerhill chairmen and secretary every day, we organised *Gram* (Summerhill Disco) one evening and Zoë organised games in the Lounge; a selection of historical games (*Catch-Mouse* and *Socks*) played over the years. Many enjoyed our old-school selection of melodies during Gram night and were happy to dance. *Socks* was popular amongst both kids and adults and the Lounge once again proved itself the best location for this game.

At arrival every guest received a little package, including a peg and a map of the school. With the help of the map and tours, provided by some current Summerhill kids', visitors could familiarise themselves with the site and certain Summerhillian terminologies such as; the *Beeston*, the *House* or the *Carriages*. We also set up a peg board for our guests and instead of name tags (a commonly used accessory at other conferences), they all got a piece of wood to decorate in the Art Room and use it as their peg when leaving the site.

Our team was also happy to provide workshops during the event. We had Zoë talking about her experiences, a group of current and old Summerhill students shared their views on life at and after Summerhill, a group of current Summerhill teachers were also happy to participate in a Q&A session, just like Summerhill's "Paperwork Team"; a group of staff members who regularly take part in writing our school policies and prepare all our documents for inspections.



We have really enjoyed hosting this event and support all those enthusiastic people who came to learn from each other and share their own experiences with us. Therefore, over the coming years we are planning to host some more conferences, meetings and gatherings here, at Summerhill leading up to and on the 100th Birthday.

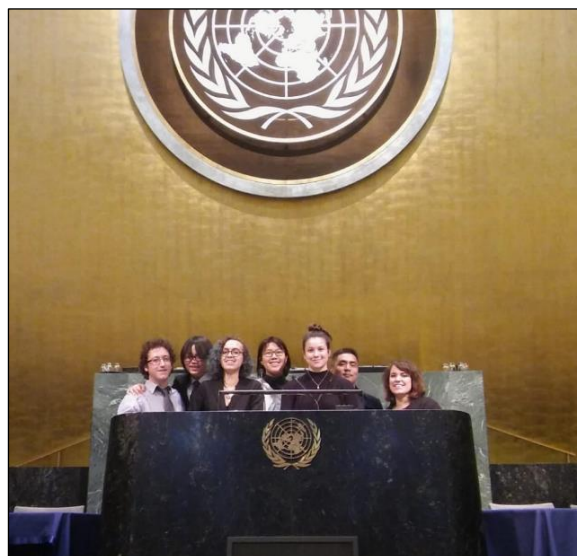
- written by Szilvia Kékesi, Summerhill School

- photos by Joshua Higgins

Summerhillians at the 2018 UNIS-UN conference

General Assembly Hall, United Nations Headquarters, New York City
27th February- 2nd March, 2018

Students from Summerhill School were invited for a second time to take part in the United Nations International School conference, held at the United Nations Headquarters in New York City. The conference has been running for the past 40 years and hosts 700 students from around the world every year. In previous years eminent speakers such as Mr. Ban Ki-moon, Mr. Kofi Annan and Ms. Hillary Clinton have attended, sparking debates on global issues, as well as providing great opportunities to network.



The topic of the UNIS-UN 2018 debate was 'Under CTRL: Technology, Innovation and the Future of Work' and explored the issues surrounding technology, innovation and the potential social and political implications of living in a digital world. Students from 17 countries attended the conference this year.



Summerhill students who attended gained a great insight into the risks of relying on technology and the implications when data falls into the wrong hands, and how this could affect our rights and privacy. Speakers discussed how our digital footprints are used to tailor our web browsing experience. Students also explored the great benefits technology could have on our lifestyles and how an automated workforce could lead to a more sustainable future. The level of debate was high, and students' focus, interests and engagement

highlighted the diverse range of skills Summerhill students possess.

We learnt a great deal about how technology is shaping our futures and how we all need to be prepared for a future where programming, coding and diagnostics will form a significant part of the job market. It was also exciting seeing Summerhillians network with future leaders and diplomats, which wouldn't have been possible without the generous donation from The A.S. Neill Summerhill Trust.

We are in contact with the UNIS-UN organisers for Summerhill students attending the 2019 conference in March, as well as on the conference topics. There are already interests at the school for the upcoming conference and we are looking into how we can create an opportunity for Summerhill students to experience debating and networking at the United Nations again.

- written by James Coulter and Tomo Usuda

Henry's World Travels in Education

Here are a few images and a few words to update everyone on my world travels in education during 2017 and 2018. It really was a great two years regarding invites and I am always amazed at how far and wide A.S. Neill's inspirations take me.

2017

Israel



My first journey took me to Israel for the [IDEC](#) (International Democratic Education Conference). It was lovely for the IDEC to return to its birthplace at [The Democratic School of Hadera](#) and it really was a pleasure to be there. The movement of Democratic Education across Israel is really exciting, including many state funded schools.

Austria

I was invited as a keynote speaker at the [Conversation for Change](#) conference held in St Anton am Arlberg in Austria. The conversation for change team focus on all global issues. I was there on behalf of education and was, as always, representing A.S. Neill and Summerhill.



Two trips to Japan

I was invited to Japan by Kageki Asakura from [Tokyo Shure](#), in April 2017 to talk about Summerhill and to help promote the coming [APDEC](#) (Asian Pacific Democratic Education Conference) which was held in Tokyo. I did a talk in Kyoto and one in Tokyo.





These events were quite unique because we had old and present day pupils at the conferences but also parents too, which made these events very special. I also did a Summerhill meeting workshop at Tokyo Shure and another very small talk, which was pretty much in someone's front room. They cooked us food and we had a very lovely informal chat.

Summerhill and I have had a very long lasting connection with Japan which made these trips very special. Also being a part of the second APDEC was a real pleasure as I was a speaker at the first one in [Taiwan in 2016](#).

Spain

For a few years now, I have been invited by [La Violeta](#) to Madrid to lecture at a university course on alternative methods of education. This time, they organised an extra few events, including an additional talk and a workshop.



Russia



This was my first time in Russia. I was invited by Katia Melihova who runs a summer camp called [Kavardak](#). The summer camp is beautiful and I was invited out there this year as a music facilitator which I will write about below. Katia definitely kept me on my toes running from event to event. In the short time I was out there I met a huge amount of people interested in Summerhill and A.S. Neill's work.

EUDEC, France

The democratic education movement is young in France but is gaining huge momentum due to [Ramin Farhangi](#) and his team. It was a well-organised event with lots of participants but unfortunately I had to leave early to catch a flight to India. No rest for the wicked!



India

I was invited to India by Sanjiv and his team from the [Oasis Movement](#). They work with children and adults and do short summer camps for kids mainly out of the state system to help break the regime of hierarchy and help them realise they have a voice and how to use it. They do this by showing them how to run meetings and say, “You are in charge now, make your own rules and solve your own conflicts.” The interesting thing is, the adults just move back and don’t get involved. They also work with adults in the same way and arrange courses that last for 3 years for people to self-analyse themselves. I spoke to lots of people who had been on these courses and the feedback was really amazing.



They have the camps all over India now and the bit I loved the most was that A.S. Neill’s ‘Freedom Not Licence’ book was their main textbook for all their courses. :)

The [IDEC](#), APDEC and [InDEC](#) conferences have all joined together this year and are taking place in Bangalore, India in November.



Releasing Potential, UK



I'm always happy to get involved with events within our own shores. This event was focusing on special educational needs across the country and how difficult it is to give the children what they need when there is still so much expectation from the schools and the kids. It was really nice being in a place that was talking more about and appreciating social and emotional development more than academic subjects.

2018

Freedom to Learn Forum (at Summerhill)

This has been written about in another article but I will add that it was an amazing opportunity for me, who, when travelling, can't take everyone with me, to bring an audience to Summerhill to have access to and do presentations with our amazing teachers, people in charge of policy's and inspections, present and ex-pupils and just the amazing atmosphere of the place. This event is what has inspired us to host "The Summerhill Experience" event in August 2019. So keep your eyes peeled about that.

New York



What a pleasure it was to be invited to this year's [AERO](#) conference in New York. AERO standing for Alternative Education Resource Organization. It was my first time whilst I have been doing talks to be invited to the US. The AERO conference is a longstanding event that has been running for 20 years. At the heart of AERO is Jerry Mintz and Wylie Khun. I felt privileged to be invited into the headquarters to see the team at work.

Russia

As mentioned above, I was invited back to Russia to be a music facilitator for two weeks at an International summer camp called [Kavardak](#) in Vladimir, a few hours outside of Moscow. Our previous art teacher, who is now our San houseparent, Lyndon was also invited. Both of us were struck by the pace and the after midnight staff meetings but it truly was a wonderful few weeks. The atmosphere was as



close to Summerhill's as I have ever seen. Katia and Amir are the two in charge and the camps have been running for 6 years now. I'm already excited to see what their next adventure will be. I recommend checking out the link and scrolling down a few pages to see some of the stunning photographs posted on the Facebook page.

Brazil

Summerhill was visited by a group of 30 teachers from a remote city called Macapa at the beginning of the year. They were part of the [Metamorphose Project](#) doing a tour



to gain inspiration for their own schools and education system. What amazed me about it was how far they all came to visit us at Summerhill and to visit Finland. This came more clear to me when I travelled out there because it took me 3 days to get there and 6 flights.

Macapa is a small city to the southeast of the Amazon Rainforest right at the mouth of the Amazon River. As the river at that point is 15 miles wide, the only way to get there was via plane. I spent 5 days out there with Leo Pahkin from the Finnish National Board of Education.

I then travelled to Sao Paulo invited by Andresa and Augusto who were both ex-Summerhill staff members. It was lovely to see them. They arranged for me to do a workshop and a talk at Instituto Singularidades.

I also visited the [Wish School](#) whilst there. A lovely little place that totally adapts their curriculum around the individual child. Their building had also been designed in such a way that children could move walls and reshape their classrooms. Fun!

All in all it has been an amazing few years of travel for me and it isn't over yet as I am about to fly out to the Republic of Korea for a 10-day tour too.

Will keep you all posted!

Also, hot off the newsreel, I am excited to announce, I have become a guardian member of the [Phoenix Education Trust](#). They support Democratic Education within the UK by reaching out to schools, supporting democratic learning communities and generally spreading the love of freedom for the child. They are also the main team that set up the Freedom to Learn Forum so I have worked with them quite intently over the past year. They are amazing people doing lots of amazing things within our own shores. Click the link above if you want to find out more about them and find out about up and coming events.

- written by Henry Readhead

The A.S. Neill Summerhill Trust

The A. S. Neill Summerhill Trust is a registered charity whose purpose is to promote the educational philosophy, ideas, life and writings of A.S. Neill, and to provide bursaries or other forms of financial assistance to school pupils. The Trust also works to promote the re-publication and translation of existing books, new books, overseas visits by school staff to give talks, school visitor days at Summerhill as



well as Summerhill pupils visiting other schools to run workshops on children's rights and democracy. Each year the trustees consider several applications for bursaries towards school fees. Because our funds are limited, we can currently award bursaries only to current pupils. Parents should contact the school office for information on how to apply for a bursary from the A. S. Neill Summerhill Trust.

A very big thank you to all our donors who have so generously supported the spirit of Summerhill. Your donations help kids remain at the School who would otherwise have to leave, and provide extracurricular activities that would be beyond the School's ability to provide.

If you'd like to make a difference to a child's life, you too can make a [donation](#) to the Trust. Whether it is a one off or regular donation, we will spend it wisely.

£25 means a child can join their friends on a school trip.

£50 will pay for two extra-curricular lessons.

£100 will pay for travel costs incurred by the External Affairs Committee during their promotion of Summerhill & the ideas/philosophies of A.S. Neill.

£1,000 will provide assistance over two terms for parents who are struggling to pay their child's school fees.

A regular donation made by standing order will become an important part of our 'bread and butter'.

To make a gift or regular donation, or for more info on the A.S. Neill Summerhill Trust, please contact the School office on 01728 830540 or email:

office@summerhillschool.co.uk.

You can also write to The A. S. Neill Summerhill Trust, c/o Summerhill School, Westward Ho, Leiston, Suffolk, IP16 4HY.

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